


University
of Idaho

Competency-Based Education and Other Instruction Techniques

Communication Skills
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Course Overview

- Purpose of Instructor Development
- How Adults Learn
- Communication Skills

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Qualities of Your Best Instructors

- What qualities made them special?

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Some Instructor Qualities

- Confident in their knowledge and skill
- Sense of humor
- Enthusiasm about the subject matter
- Made you feel valued and important
- Used different models of teaching

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Ways to Enhance Your Teaching Style

- Know your topic
 - Be knowledgeable and skilled in your subject matter
- Learners share decision-making that relates to learning
- Be fair with students
- Be friendly
 - Have a sense of humor
- Have acceptance and empathy

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More Skills

- Be dynamic, spontaneous, enthusiastic, open, positive
- Acknowledge you do not know all the answers
 - Get the answers in the follow-up
- Practice what you preach and advocate
 - Walk the talk

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Listening Skills

- Critical in any learning environment
- Instructors need to listen as well as talk
- Having poor listening skills is the fastest way to kill a class or presentation

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Ways to Build Effective Listening Skills

- Concentrate on listening NOT on what you want to say
- Maintain eye contact on the person who is speaking
- Avoid interrupting
- Ask questions when you don't understand what the student is saying
 - Paraphrase the student's message
- Pay attention to nonverbal messages
 - May convey more meaning than what is said

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Two Types of Communication

- Verbal
 - What is said to you
 - Contains the content
- Nonverbal
 - Is the behavior that is expressed
 - Is related to emotions

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Some Nonverbal Communication

- Body language
- Appropriate touching
 - Shaking hands
 - Pat on the back
 - Use sparingly and carefully
- Voice characteristics
 - Sarcasm or sincerity
- Body position

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Cultural Differences are Important

- Eye contact versus lack of eye contact
- Body closeness
- Touching

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Nonverbal Signals

- Students rolling their eyes
- Eyes glazed over
- Fighting sleep
- Fiddling with papers or doodling
- Texting or typing on the computer
- Surfing the Internet
- Do they look confused

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Nonverbal Observations

- Look for your consistency between verbal and nonverbal messages
 - You may be saying one thing
 - Body image is saying another
- Recognize mixed messages
- Watch your audience for nonverbal signals

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Feedback

- Critical to learning new information
- Instructors can make a student receptive or defensive about receiving it
- Too much feedback can be overwhelming and degrading
 - Need to provide corrective actions or suggestions for improvement
- Feedback should be positive not negative
 - Make suggestions for improvement

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Training Feedback

- Often used in small group settings
- Needs to be constructive not destructive
- Feedback should come from the instructor and the receiver
 - How do you think you did
 - What might have you done differently
- Don't overlook mistakes that need immediate correction
 - May need to go back a previous step

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Avoid Nonspecific Feedback

- That was good
 - What was good
- Your communication skills need more work
 - Which communication skill needed improvement
- Focus on facts
- Focus on behaviors
- Maintain a positive attitude
 - I did that while I was learning as well

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Ways to Provide Effective Feedback

1. Have students perform an observable behavior that matches the lesson objectives
 - Identify their grasp of the concept by questioning them
 - Have students engage in an activity that will demonstrate their understanding of the topic
2. Provide immediate feedback

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3. Correct one error at a time
4. Be specific
 - Identify the cause of the error
 - Provide specific information for improvement
5. Use a positive approach
6. Keep the student involved in the learning process
7. Check for understanding

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Conclusions

- Instructors need to be prepared
- Instructors need to be flexible
- Get away from older styles of instruction
 - Standing behind the podium
 - Move around, ask questions, engage your audience
- Never, never, never, never, never read information directly from the book

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Remember

- You are a teacher
- You are a mentor
- You're a coach
- You are an entertainer
- You are _____

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